PHILIPPINE PAPERS 7

Primer on Philippine Foreign Policy

PRIMER ON PHILIPPINE FOREIGN POLICY

Prepared by the
Department of Foreign Affairs

I. BASIC ELEMENTS ON FOREIGN POLICY

What is foreign policy?

Foreign policy is a set of guidelines followed by a government of a country in order to promote its national interest through the conduct of its relations with other countries. Foreign policy is a part of the general program of government. In other words, it is an extension of domestic policy.

What is meant by national interest?

National interest refers to the general long-term and continuing purpose which a government pursues in order to promote the welfare, security and progress of the people.

Who formulates Philippine foreign policy?

The President of the Philippines formulates our foreign policy with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Policy Council. The Foreign Policy Council is composed of Cabinet members, former Presidents and such other officials as may be designated by the President.

II. GUIDELINES OF PHILIPPINE FOREIGN POLICY

What are the main features of Philippine foreign policy?

1. Adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and to the universally accepted principles of international law.

2. Promotion of relations with Socialist countries and friendship with all countries.

3. Identification with the Third World.

4. Regional cooperation in Southeast Asia.

5. Continued friendly relations with the United States.

A. ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN CHARTER

What was the role of the Philippines in the foundation of the United Nations Charter in 1945?

The Philippines was one of the original founders of the United Nations. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carlos P. Romulo was the signatory for the Philippines when the UN Charter was signed in San Francisco in 1945 by 51 original members.

Secretary Romulo became in 1949-50 the fourth president of the United Nations General Assembly.

In what fields in the UN does the Philippines give its traditional support?

1. The Philippines maintains its traditional support for the rights of people who are still under colonial rule, to self-determination, independence and eventual membership in the United Nations.

2. The Philippines supports the policy of non-interference and peaceful settlement of disputes.

3. The Philippines supports issues on the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights.

4. The Philippines also supports matters relating to the promotion of social progress and standard of life and all other matters concerning the progress of developing countries.

5. On security and political matters, the Philippines opposes the use of force, or the

threat of force, in the relations among nations.

6. The Philippines participates actively on issues involving environment, population and status of women.

What is the Philippines participation in the UN specialized agencies?

The UN specialized agencies which deal with problems and solutions in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields have been established by specific agreements concluded by governments. The Philippines is signatory to most of these agreements.

Being an agricultural country, the Philippines is actively involved in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Secretary of Labor Blas Ople was elected president of the recent Sixth Session of the International Labor Organization (ILO) by 125 member countries. The Philippines also participates actively in the World Health Organization (WHO), in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and others.

B. FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND PROMOTION OF RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

What is the general policy of the Philippines in relation to all countries?

The Philippines seeks friendship with all countries of the world, regardless of race, creed or ideology, and it strives to promote as much relations with them as possible in all fields of activity. For this purpose, the Philippines now maintains 41 diplomatic missions and 16 consulates all over the world. It also takes part actively in many kinds of international and regional activities.

However, the Philippines wants to put an end to the practice of extra-territoriality in keeping with its dignity as a sovereign Republic and with the developments of the times.

RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

What has been the policy of the Philippines with Socialist countries since Independence?

There has been a change from the original policy adopted by the Philippines when it became a sovereign state in 1946. During that time, Filipino leaders had been made to believe that the Socialist countries were enemies of the Philippines and that these countries threatened the security of the Philippines.

The Philippine Government under President Marcos now believes that it is in the best interest of the Philippines to be friendly with the Socialist countries and to promote economic, social, cultural and political relations with them.

What steps have been taken by the Philippines to promote relations with the Socialist countries?

The Philippines has established diplomatic relations with Eastern European countries, namely, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania as well as with Mongolia.

On March 12, 1975 the Philippine Embassy in Romania was opened. This is the first Philippine Embassy established in a Socialist country with a resident ambassador. In April 1975, the President of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, visited the Philippines upon the invitation of President Marcos. President Ceausescu was the first head of a Socialist country to visit the Philippines. During the visit, agreements on trade, cultural, scientific and technological cooperation, as well as extension of visa facilities, were signed.

A trade agreement was signed with Bulgaria on May 2, 1975. Similar agreements are under negotiation with Hungary and the Soviet Union.

Establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union is expected soon.

RELATIONS WITH CHINA

What is the present state of Philippine relations with the People's Republic of China?

As a result of the recent state visit to Peking by President Ferdinand E. Marcos the Philippines established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

The Joint Communique which was signed on June 9, 1975 in Peking by President Ferdinand E. Marcos and Premier Chou En-lai provides for mutual recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China. A trade agreement was also concluded on the same day.

Does this mean that the Philippines may turn Communist?

The Philippines' recognition of the People's Republic of China does not imply at all that the Philippines will adopt communism.

The Joint Communique establishing diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China provides that the differences betwen the economic, political and social systems of the two governments should not constitute an obstacle to the establishment and development of peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries. The communique further declares that the Philippines and the People's Republic of China will hold mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and follow closely the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Prior to this development, what was the nature of Philippine relations with China?

Philippine Consulates General were opened in 1947 in Shanghai and Amoy. But direct diplomatic relations between the Philippines and China officially began with the establishment in 1948 of the Philippine Legation in Nanking, former Chinese capital.

After the fall of Nanking into Communist hands the Legation closed its offices in Nanking and moved to Taiwan. The People's Republic of China was established on the mainland in 1949, but the Philippine Government did not recognize the new regime and instead chose to maintain relations with the Chiang Government of Taiwan.

The diplomatic mission in Taipei was formally opened in 1956. There was no official contact between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China until the 1970's.

How does this development affect Philippine relations with Taiwan?

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, the Philippines terminated all existing official relations with Taiwan. It also ended the Treaty of Amity and Friendship with Taiwan as well as all other official agreements. Commercial relations, however, will be continued on a non-governmental basis subject to individual agreements.

To what extent has Philippine relations with the People's Republic of China been expanded?

At the invitation of Premier Chou En-lai, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos visited the People's Republic of China in September 1974 as a special representative of the President.

The special missions sent to the People's Republic of China last year by President Marcos negotiated an agreement for the purchase of crude oil from China. Under this agreement, the Philippines has so far received 250,000 tons of crude oil from the People's Republic of China in exchange for major Philippine products. Philippine exports to China consist of crude coconut oil, cement, plywood, buri fiber, abaca and logs. Philippine imports from China consist of rice, canned meat and fish, fresh fruits, tea, leather goods and laboratory and medical instruments.

In the cultural field, relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China consist mainly of exchanges of sports delegation between the two countries.

RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST

What is the Philippine policy on the Middle East?

The Philippines originally took a neutral position in the quarrel between Israel and the Arab countries. Under President Marcos, the Philippines has supported a United Nations resolution demanding that Israel withdraw from the Arab territories it has occupied since it invaded Arab lands in 1967.

The Philippines has also supported the movements to restore the rights of the people of Palestine and to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestine people.

In what other way has the Philippines improved its relations with the Middle East?

The Philippines has expanded its relations with the Middle East. In addition to the Embassy in Egypt, the Philippines has established new embassies in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Algeria, with concurrent accreditation in Lebanon, Kuwait and Abu Dhabbi.

RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

What is the Philippine policy towards Africa?

The Philippines has from the beginning always supported the independence movements in Africa and the membership of new African countries in the United Nations.

The Philippines stands by the black African countries against the policy of racial discrimination (apartheid) of the white Governments of the Republic of South Africa and of Southern Rhodesia. The Philippines also supports UN supervision over Namibia (the former mandated territories of Southeast Africa) and its eventual independence. The Philippines has cut off all relations with South Africa in compliance with United Nations' resolutions and supports economic and other sanctions against South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

In what way has the Philippines actually developed relations with Africa?

The Philippines endeavors to develop relations of cooperation with the African countries. Filipino teachers, engineers, physicians, nurses, architects, seamen, mechanics, electricians, surveyors and other professionals and technicians now work in several African countries.

On the government side, the Philippines has expanded diplomatic relations with Africa. It has two embassies in Arab Africa, one in Egypt and one in Algeria. It has two embassies in Africa south of the Sahara, namely Nigeria and Kenya, and more are contemplated.

The Philippines is a regular contributor to several funds for the benefit of the African people, for example—

1. UN Fund for Namibia
2. UN Trust for South Africa
3. UN Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa.

RELATIONS WITH JAPAN

What treaty governs Philippine-Japan relations?

It is the Philippine-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation which was formally approved by the Philippines on December 21, 1973.

What was the main purpose of the Treaty?

The main object of the Treaty was to establish equal treatment between the two countries in such matters as immigration, travel, imposition of taxes, access to the courts of justice, rights to property, conduct of all kinds of business and professional activities, and customs duties on imports and exports.

C. IDENTIFICATION WITH THE THIRD WORL

What is the Third World and how is the Philippines identified with the Third World?

The Third World is that segment of the world composed of all the developing nations including the Afro-Asian region.

As the Philippines is also a developing country it is identified with the Third World with which it shares similar problems particularly in trade and marketing of their commodities.

To meet these problems the United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was formed. It had its first meeting in Geneva in 1964.

Before every ministerial conference of the UNCTAD, members of the Third World, including the Philippines, meet to define a common and united stand on all issues concerning development.

This group of developing countries is known as the "Group of 77," although its membership has grown from 77 to 105. In fact at its major conferences like the UN Special Session on Raw Materials, the UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea and the UN Environment Conference, there is always a preparatory meeting of the Group of 77 to forge a common stand on the part of the developing countries.

The Philippines is also identified with the Afro-Asian group. A four-day symposium of the Afro-Asian Writers Union was held in Manila in

January 1975. The Philippines is a member of the executive committee of the Permanent Bureau of Afro-Asian Writers based in Cairo.

Although it is not a member of the Non-Aligned group, the Philippines has asked to be an observer in that group's forthcoming meeting, preparatory to seeking full membership.

D. REGIONAL COOPERATION

What is the Philippine policy towards the Asian region?

The Philippines regards the Asian region as one of the most important elements in its foreign relations. The Philippines, first of all, is an Asian country and it seeks to develop close and friendly ties with all other Asian countries. The Philippines identifies its interest with those of other Asian nations and promotes these interests in mutual cooperation with these Asian nations. It takes part in cooperative projects of Asian countries in all fields of activity, particularly economic, social, and cultural activities. It is an active member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

What is ASEAN?

ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It was established in August 1967 by five Asian countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, to promote the economic, social and cultural growth of the region through cooperative efforts. Much has been achieved by ASEAN in these fields resulting in great benefits to the member countries.

Is ASEAN engaged in political activities?

ASEAN was established as a non-political association, but the member countries know that they need complete cooperation in order to promote their objectives. For this reason, they have engaged in consultations with one another on political matters and have taken some political action among themselves.

The following are examples of ASEAN political activities:

(1) The ASEAN countries jointly decided to recognize the new Government of Cambodia after the defeat of the government of Lon Nol and expressed readiness to enter into friendly relations with this Government and the new Government in South Vietnam.

(2) The ASEAN countries have been working together for the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia.

(3) The ASEAN countries plan to sign in the near future a treaty of amity and cooperation. The draft of the treaty has already been recommended by the ASEAN foreign ministers for approval by their Heads of State. It contains provisions on non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes among the countries which will sign the treaty.

What are some of the ASEAN projects?

The ASEAN follows a program of activities in various fields such as commerce and industry, tourism, mass media, food, agriculture, civil air transportation and communications and socio-cultural activities.

Its economic activities include not only economic cooperation among the ASEAN countries but also economic cooperation with other countries and regional or international organizations.

To what extent has ASEAN relations with EEC been expanded?

During the past two years, ASEAN has carried on dialogues or established programs for economic and technical cooperation with the EEC (European Economic Community) to obtain improved treatment of major products of export interest to ASEAN.

The EEC, on the other hand, has offered to finance ASEAN projects on trade promotion in the EEC in 1975-76.

To promote relations between the two regional groups, an ASEAN/EEC Joint Study Group was established in June 1975 to identify and examine further areas of cooperation.

E. RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

What is the present policy of the Philippines towards the United States?

The Philippines maintains friendly relations and economic ties with the United States. In an effort to strengthen ties for mutual benefit, a review of existing treaties between the Philippines and the United States is underway.

What is the nature of Philippine security arrangement with the United States?

There are three basic agreements between the Philippines and the United States. These are: (1) the Military Bases Agreement (signed on 14 March 1947); (2) the Military Assistance Agreement (signed on 21 March 1947); and (3) the Mutual Defense Treaty (signed on 30 August 1951).

As a colony of the United States from 1898 to 1946, the Philippines completely depended on the United States for protection. In turn the United States used the Philippines as a place to station military forces to protect its political and commercial interests not only in this country but also in the whole of the Asian region. Thus, American military bases were established in the Philippines while it was still a colony under the United States.

When the Philippines regained Independence in 1946, the Filipino leaders of the Philippine Government believed that because of the destruction of the country during World War II, the Philippines would not be able to defend itself against any enemy and, therefore, had to continue under the old military arrangements with the United States. This time it was necessary to sign the three treaties stated above because the Philippines was already a sovereign state.

What does the Military Bases Agreement provide for?

This agreement allowed the United States to establish, operate and maintain military, naval and air bases in the Philippines. The number and area of the bases has been reduced gradually over the years. Originally, the use of the bases was for a period of 99 years. This was later reduced to 25 years. The agreement will end in 1991 unless revised earlier.

At present, are the military bases still necessary for the protection of the Philippines?

The Philippine Government is reviewing its stand on the further need for the bases, in consultation with the United States in the light of new developments in Asia.

Some arguments against the continued presence of US bases in the Philippines are as follows:

(a) The Philippines is not in danger of external aggression; and

(b) US bases may provoke nuclear aggression by enemies of the United States who are not enemies of the Philippines.

Is there actual harm done to the Philippines at present by the presence of military bases?

Yes, irritants have been created between Filipinos and Americans in the matter of jurisdiction over persons involved in crimes committed inside and outside of the bases. Many Filipinos have been killed in such incidents.

For example, a Filipino was killed while allegedly trying to steal a bicycle. Two Filipino fishermen were shot while fishing within the off-limits area of the Subic Naval Base. Another Filipino was killed in broad daylight by an American serviceman and the American claimed that he mistook the Filipino for a wild boar. In most of these cases, the Philippine Government filed protests with the American Government with no result. The Americans involved were either acquitted by the US court martial or were taken out of the Philippines by the US authorities while the criminal cases against them were still pending in court.

Why does this happen? Are there no provisions on criminal jurisdiction in the Military Bases Agreement?

There are provisions on criminal jurisdiction in the Agreement but these provisions are favorable only to the Americans.

First, the Philippine Government has no jurisdiction over an American serviceman who commits an offense while in the performance of his military duty. It is the base commander who determines whether or not the soldier is on duty, and the commander issues a certification to this effect. The Philippine Government could disagree with the certification of the base commander, but the final decision is made through diplomatic negotiation and not by law.

Second, when an American serviceman is accused of committing an offense over which the Philippine Government has jurisdiction, the American authorities keep custody of the serviceman. For this reason, many accused Americans have been taken out of the Philippines even before hearing of their cases have been completed. In other countries, where there are American bases, the custody of an accused American serviceman rests with the host government.

Has the Philippine Government done anything to change the provisions of the Military Bases Agreement which are harmful to the Philippines?

Changes in the Agreement can be made only with the consent of the two Governments. The Philippines has been negotiating with the United States over many years at technical level. President Marcos is known to favor meetings at policy level where decisions could be reached more quickly.

In its recent meeting on the military bases, assistance, and mutual defense agreement, the Foreign Policy Council recommended that changes be made in the agreements, that national survival demands their urgent review and the adoption of alternatives that best serve the national interest.

What changes or gains have so far been made by negotiations?

1. The lease period of the agreement has been reduced from 99 to 25 years.
2. There were originally 23 bases and reservations held by the US. These have been reduced to only two major ones, Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base.
3. All titles to base lands were turned over to the Philippines in 1956. The US Government used to claim ownership of these lands.
4. The US Government has agreed to consult the Philippine Government whenever it needs the bases for military combat operations, for stockpiling of nuclear weapons and for installation of long-range missiles.
5. A Mutual Defense Board with Filipino and American members has been created for joint consultation, planning and liaison service.

What is the Military Assistance Agreement?

This Agreement provides for a program of assistance by the United States to the Philippines in the form of military equipment. It also provides for the sending of a US military advisory board to the Philippines. This is the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG). It provides advice and assistance to the Philippine Government on military and naval matters. Its expenses are paid by the Philippine Government.

What kind of military assistance do we receive from the United States?

Under this Agreement, the United States is committed to supply the Philippines certain initial equipment, supplies and maintenance items. Additional equipment and supplies other than those surplus to the needs of the United States are furnished by the US but subject to reimbursement by the Philippine Government, which means that the Philippines has to pay for them or they remain properties of the United States.

What is the Mutual Defense Treaty?

This treaty provides that an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either the Philippines or the US or on the island territories under US jurisdiction in the Pacific Ocean would be dangerous to its peace and safety and that each party would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

What guarantee has America given for the national security of the Philippines?

The terms of the Mutual Defense Treaty do not ensure the security of the Philippines. There is no provision whatsoever for an automatic declaration of war or immediate retaliation by America in case the Philippines is attacked.

Would the United States come to the assistance of the Philippines if a foreign power attacks the country but not the American bases?

At the hearings held by the Symington Committee of the US Senate, it came out that the United States is obligated to repel an attack only if the American bases in the Philippines were directly attacked, i.e., there is no obligation on the part of the United States to repel an attack on the Philippines if such an attack does not endanger the US bases. That was also the gist of assurances by past American Presidents (Eisenhower and Johnson): that the deployment of American forces in the Philippines was such that an attack on the Philippines would necessarily involve an attack on American forces and hence would be instantly repelled.

Under the American system of Government the US President cannot declare war, only the US Congress can. The Philippines, therefore, could be attacked and conquered by an enemy while US Congress tries to decide whether to declare war or not.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

On July 4, 1946, the Philippines entered into an Executive Agreement with the United States. This is the Philippine Trade Act of 1946. Why did we enter into this Agreement?

Our badly shattered economy after World War II forced the Philippines to seek economic assistance from the United States for the rehabilitation of the country.

The Constitution was amended to include a provision in the Philippine Trade Act of 1946 which gave United States citizens equal rights with Filipinos in the development, disposition, exploitation and utilization of all agricultural, timber, mineral lands and other natural resources of the Philippines. The amendment came to be known as Parity.

The Trade Agreement was later revised due to provisions which discriminated in favor of American citizens. It became known as Laurel-Langley Agreement which took effect on July 1, 1956 and expired on July 3, 1974.

How does the Philippines conduct its economic relations with the United States after the termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement?

There is no trade agreement between the Philippines and the United States at the moment. The Philippines now conducts normal commercial transactions with the United States as with any other country, although negotiations are in process for the conclusion of some sort of economic treaty.

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